

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9304

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 8130

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PO

SUBJECT: SOCIALISTS SUSPEND LEFTWINGERS

SUMMARY: THE SOCIALIST LEADERSHIP HAS SUSPENDED AIRES RODRIGUES AND FOUR OTHER PS LEFTWINGERS FOR BREACHES OF PARTY DISCIPLINE. THE LEADERSHIP IS DETERMINED TO MAINTAIN ITS AUTHORITY EVEN AT THE RISK OF PROVOKING A LEFT-WING DEFECTION. THE LEADERSHIP IS CONFIDENT THAT, SHOULD THE LEFTWINGERS LEAVE THE PARTY, FEW AMONG THE RANK AND FILE WOULD FOLLOW. THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF LEFTWINGERS IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, HOWEVER, COULD BE MORE TROUBLESOME. END SUMMARY.

1. SOCIALISTS SUSPEND LEFTWINGERS: THE SOCIALIST PARTY NATIONAL SECRETARIAT ON NOV 22 SUSPENDED
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LEFT-WING ACTIVISTS ANTONIO AIRES RODRIGUES,

CARMELINDA PEREIRA, JOSE LUIS MENDES, HENRIQUE GOMES DA COSTA, AND FRANCISCO FORTUNADO. ALL ARE PROMINENT MEMBERS OF THE PS LISBON LABOR COMMITTEE AND WERE PRIME-MOVERS BEHIND THE OPPOSITION NATIONAL COMMITTEE LIST PRESENTED (AND DEFEATED) AT THE RECENT PS CONGRESS.

2. DISCIPLINE WILL BE MAINTAINED: IN ANNOUNCING THE SUSPENSION, THE PARTY CITED A STATEMENT CIRCULATED BY THE FIVE SUPPORTING A RALLY PLANNED FOR NOV 24 TO PROTEST BOMBINGS AND TERRORISM, IMPLICITLY CRITICIZING THE GOVERNMENT'S INABILITY TO DEAL WITH THE SITUATION. PORTUGAL'S LARGEST PARTY, THE STATEMENT POINTED OUT, CANNOT TOLERATE INTERNAL INDISCIPLINE AND ANARCHY SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH EXISTED WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES PRIOR TO THE NOV 1975 ABORTIVE LEFTIST COUP. THOSE WHO FAILED TO DESTROY THE SOCIALIST PARTY FROM WITHOUT, IT CONTINUED, WOULD NOT NOW SUCCEED FROM WITHIN.

3. COMMENT: THE LEFTWINGERS HAD BEEN WARNED THAT FURTHER INDISCIPLINE WOULD NOT BE TOLERATED. REFERRING AT THE PS CONGRESS TO INTERNAL DISSENSION, SOARES MADE HIS POSITION UNMISTAKABLY CLEAR WHEN HE SAID: ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. SUBSEQUENT PLACEMENT OF THE LEFT-WING DOMINATED LISBON LABOR COMMITTEE UNDER THE RECEIVERSHIP OF LABOR MINISTER MARCELO CURTO WAS ANOTHER WARNING. THE EXCLUSION FROM TOP LEADERSHIP POSITIONS OF LEFTWINGERS WHO HAD OPPOSED THE SOARES SLATE AT THE CONGRESS UNDERSCORED THE POINT. AIRES RODRIGUES AND COMPANY APPARENTLY DID NOT GET THE MESSAGE. FURTHER DEFIANCE COULD LEAD TO EXPULSION.

4. THE SUSPENSIONS AGAIN RAISE THE SPECTER OF A SPLIT WITHIN THE SOCIALIST PARTY. THE LEADERSHIP IS PREPARED TO ACCEPT A SPLIT RATHER THAN MAKE CONCESSIONS TO THE LEFTWINGERS. THE ACTIVITIES OF LOPES CARDOSO, AIRES RODRIGUES, ET AL., AT THE PS CONGRESS LEFT MUCH BITTERNESS AMONG THE MODERATE

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LEADERSHIP FROM SOARES ON DOWN. THEY ARE IN NO MOOD TO TOLERATE FURTHER INDISCIPLINE. AS RUI MATEUS PUT IT, MODERATES LIKE HIMSELF WERE FORCED OFF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE BY THE LEFTWINGERS DURING THE 1974 CONGRESS AND ACCEPTED THE RESULTS LIKE DISCIPLINED SOCIALISTS. THE MODERATES NOW DEMAND THAT THE LEFTWINGERS DO THE SAME.

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